FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER
Founded by Carl Allison Evans (1880 - 1956)

OUR PURPOSE: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

RECIPE FOR THE SIMPLE LIFE

HAVING JUST come back from Nantucket, with my eyes focused for either the long-swelling green waves of both the sea and the moors or for the closeness of morning fog or the distance and dimness of the sort that falls by moonlight, and my nervous-system at rest as a result of the heat of the sun cooled by constant winds from the southwest, and all my senses restored to the delicate scents of broom, wild roses, and honeysuckle night itself and to the sturdy day-long singing of birds, I am interested for my own sake in preserving what I can of the simple life I have been leading. I am conscious that this life is the way to exist in which my being can appreciate best and most conscientiously what is essential and what is not.

Coming home, I am startled by the moil and confusion in the air over Long Island, by the pollution that stings my eyes the instant I step off the plane, and, above all, by the noise— Muzak, and traffic, and radio and TV and, when I reach home, the telephone. Add the visual counterparts of such distractions—the moving montage of lights on turnpikes, the sights to be beheld on TV, the photographs in magazines and newspapers. Add the countless messages being sent to us by one media or another. And the result is a concatenation in which the simple life does not exist at all except by the most steadfast effort and desire.

I have learned (all over again, which is my way) that to get back to the simple life I have to exert myself; and I do. . . . When I look closely at these efforts I notice how much they resemble a closing-up of the self, self-concern, and withdrawal. They aren't what they look like. For such things cannot be part of the simple life. Founded in anger, despair, or irriration, or a desire for reparation or retaliation, they only perpetuate and increase the pain of complexity and connection. Their exact opposites—patience rather than irritation, lovingness rather than anger, faith rather

than despair—are the fundamental ingredients of the simple life. With them, I have learned, it is possible to sit down in the very eye of the hurriance, with the world blowing apart both above and around your head and even under your feet, and to stay there in perfect confidence that you are being sustained, that all really is well despite what it looks like outside. . . .

The creation of this everlasting shelter is not ours. It is a gift that is available if we want it. Wanting it is the one action open to us. And if we do want it, everything else that interrupts begins to fall away. The only problem, I would say from experience, is to want it enough. . . . Our reasons for wanting it are easily come by, for they are all human reasons. Plain weariness is enough. Or longing for creativeness within ourself. Or the realization that only in such a safe place can we find that consciousness of connection with eternity which is our lifelong goal. —P.G.

GOD IS WATCHING

Nina Willis Walter

God is watching; all is well.
He the wildest storm can quell.
Poor weak human, shed no tear;
What can harm when He is near?
When the skies are dark above,
And the seas in madness roar,
Think upon the Father's love;
Trust His mercy. Fear no more.
All your terrors He'll dispel.
God is watching: all is well.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS by Reuben L. Musey

HARVESTIME

HARVEST is a happy time! It is a time for gathering in what the earth in its abundance yields each year to men.

Looking back to springtime, the words of a familiar hymn tell us:

"We plow the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land. . . . "

The richness of spring's promise comes to fruit at harvest time!

Throughout this the season of harvest—a time indeed for thankfulness—God shows His handiwork and His omnipotence more than in any other time in the pageant of the seasons.

A "thank you" for the bounty of the harvest is expressed to the Heavenly Father, the giver of all: the hay, corn, wheat that is reaped. . . the sun, dew, and sweet honeycomb. . . the rose, the song, the harvest brought home. . . the season of plenty, the country extending from sea to sea, a land known as the "land of the free. . . ."

Once more the fields have ripened. Season follows season, each clothed in its radiance.

Harvestime, the fruitful earth has fulfilled the promise of spring. The laborer's work is done. He has planted. . . he has gathered. How rich, plentiful, and wonderful the store.

There are no words beautiful enough to describe a harvest moon, or sunset before the moon comes up. There are no words beautiful enough to describe the soft gauzy have we see when gazing at the stars on a harvest night.

These words of John Greenleaf Whittier, the Quaker poet, are timely for this season:

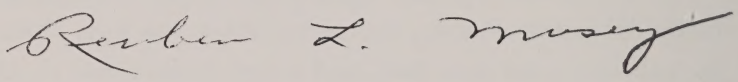
"Let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us, for His golden corn,

Send up our thanks to God!"

Harvestime, 1975. Fellowship in Prayer pauses on this, the twenty-fifth anniversary. The seeds of spring have been planted. They have been watered and nurtured. The fruits of labor have yielded an increase. There is a measure of growth. The Fellowship has welcomed more new subscribers than in any period of its history.

The staff again turns its thoughts to the anniversary theme: "A look backward. . . an aim forward." In doing so, as the seasons come and go, we thank God for His tender love and care, His gifts of love in all things.

His direction and His guidance and help in instilling into the hearts of people the purpose of the Fellowship makes possible Fellowship in Prayer's reaching more people.



GALAXY GLORY

Esther Morgan

When I stand out of doors in the country at night,
In the stillness and grandeur of faraway light,
Then I think of the star-spangled nature of man
Which we have from the Father since likeness began.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
and thy glory unto their children
Psalm 90:16

TO KNOW THE MASTER

Emma S. McLaughlin

DON'T YOU SEE what you do? You sit gazing out the window, communing with nature, while others make the most of every minute, grasping each opportunity."

His small, piercing blue eyes held my gaze, as if defying me to look away. His words were almost an accusation. I sat across from my guest, humbled, frozen in the moment, unable to say all I so desperately wanted to say in my own defense. I felt I was being accused, brought before the bar and convicted, all in the space of a breath — and then he changed the topic of conversation, turned it into channels that flowed away from me, that swirled about his own multiple activities and those of others. The chance to plead my case was swept away.

As I said goodbye and closed the door behind his retreating form, I realized that he only spoke the truth. I *was* a watcher, a listener, delighting in all that transpired in the world around me. I watched the changing seasons, their pageantry evidenced in a procession of flowers and shrubs. Early crocuses were soon replaced by daffodils, hyacinths, and tulips — and these in turn gave way to lilacs, peonies, petunias and pansies. I waited for the arrival of roses, glorying in the fragility of dawn-streaked petals.

With early spring there was a swelling chorus of birdsong as robins, orioles and wrens returned from winter vacations and exchanged reminiscenses. Then, as nesting sites were chosen and leaves unfurled to hide the building, all singing died away and was replaced by a great busyness.

I watched shadows — dark, massive pools of shadows and delicate, swaying, fern-like ones. I watched rabbits as they nibbled their way across the yard or sat bolt upright, motionless, alert to any threat of impending danger. I laughed aloud, at times, to see them wash their faces, grooming their long ears with the same quick motion. And I watched so *much* more. Nothing ever escaped me.

With the coming of autumn I was possessed of a great exhilaration. It was as if new wine flowed through my veins with the ripening harvest, or as if a multitude of expanding wings beat restlessly in some deep, hidden cavern of my being. Something newborn waited there to be released, to mount upwards with spirals of pungent wood smoke, to fly free in the company of swirling, colored leaves. I had been born into this apex of color, this season of migration, but surely that fact alone could not account for the overwhelming emotions that swept over me, and through me, with each returning autumn.

When the last leaf had blown away and chill winds whistled about the denuded garden, I looked forward to the arrival of winter. Sitting in the darkness of night, I watched the first fall of snow, reveling in the sweep and swirl of it, a soft white cover that seemed spread upon the earth by unseen hands. It transformed, healed, and silenced, while I listened to the silences within its silence.

I walked outdoors, following close upon the heels of Orion, stalking the furtive bears, listening to the tinkle of stars in silvery chorus — and feeling my own importance shrink to normal size beneath the revolving panorama of glory.

"You gaze out the window, idle, communing with nature, while others make good use of every minute." The words returned to haunt me; I knew he thought my stillness was a waste of time. Perhaps he was right — and though now I may be able to admit the fact, I am not cast down. I am reminded, instead, of how many times Christ chose the humble things of nature to illustrate the

truths of His teachings: the wheat, the grapes, the corn, the wind, and the water. Surely if *He* deemed them to be of such great importance, they are worthy of *my* notice. And they *still* have the power to teach us so very much.

As I write, a storm approaches. It has been building slowly, almost unnoticed, muttering sullenly through most of a sultry afternoon. From past experience I know it will finally break and the fury of its anger be unleashed in stabbing lightning, defaening thunder, and a cleansing downpour of rain. I also know, from experience, that it will pass, leaving the earth serene and lovely. Clouds will be blown away, the sun will shine with a new brilliance, and the whole episode will be soon forgotten. If only our human storms could be as brief, our anger as quickly spent, and forgiveness as encompassing, as benevolent as the returning sunlight.

Life is the blink of an eyelid compared to the endurance of mountains, the constancy of stars, the predictability of tides and seasons. We can pass through it like the ant, busily lugging our burdens from here to there, never seeing beyond the path we follow — or we can live it like a grasshopper, launching ourselves spasmodically into space, missing all miracles that lie between the launch pad and our final destination.

What a pity to pass through this life knowing of Monet, Van Gogh, Cezanne and Da Vinci, but unaware of the wonderful creativity of God. How sad to be familiar with the works of Bach, Handel, and Mozart, yet turn deaf ears to the ageless symphonies of wind, water, and chorusing birds. How futile to bow our bodies, in humility, before the elaborate altars of great cathedrals and never know the reverent wonder of kneeling to cup the chalice of a tiny flower.

Yes, I am a watcher, a listener — and, like the Psalmist, I will continue to 'lift up my eyes.' Surely, one can only know the Master, the depth of His love and His enduring greatness, by studying faithfully the smallest detail of His creation.

THE LOOM OF TIME

Anonymous

Man's life is laid in the loom of time
To a pattern he does not see,
While the weavers work and the shuttles fly
Till the dawn of eternity.

Some shuttles are filled with silver threads
And some with threads of gold,
While often but the darker hues
Are all that they may hold.

But the weaver watches with skillful eyes
Each shuttle fly to and fro,
And sees the pattern so deftly wrought
As the loom moves sure and slow.

God surely planned the pattern.
Each thread, the dark and fair
Is chosen by His master skill
And placed in the web with care.

(Contributed by Elsie Schemitz)

FOR FRIEND AND FOE *Nel Modglin*

Listen,
friend and foe,
please give me pause:
We love although,
but hate BECAUSE.

THE ONE THING NECESSARY

Sister M. Thaddeus Thom, O.S.F.

Then:
I said, "Thank you, Lord."
because I meant it.
No one was watching over me
making me fold my hands.
No one said, "Say your prayers."
I said them by myself.

That seems so long ago.

Later:
I had forgotten how to pray.
Formulas were blocked out by ruthless pleasures;
God was a convenient identification;
Church—a place where bells rang for Masses:
Weddings or funerals.
What should I want there!
Confusion filled my life.

Now:
Lon ging tears at my mind.
Distance causes despair to swell.
I claw at the sky like some night creature
bothered by a waving twig.
I scream, "Why won't You leave me alone?"

And I realize. . .
I can once more pray.

THE STARLIGHT *Mary I. Harris*

When God has tucked in all the light,
He brings us the beautiful glowing night.
Flickering stars shine overhead.
They tell us when prayers are said
God's love is the very best—
He watches closely as we rest.

OUR HORIZONS

Doris Gassen

Yesterday
has passed its way.
Take not your time for thoughts
on what might have been.

New horizons await
and new challenge beckons.

Live with expectancy, joyful reception,
in constant adventurous faith.

Tune your ears to sounds of love,
your eyes to new prospects. . .
open your understanding to needs of others
which have not been spoken.

Look for good in every person
and in every happening.
Live in consciousness of His love,
which will inspire new joys.

ARCANE STORIES

Francis Merchant

The Shell of a Snail

A naturalist who had in some way learned the art of conversing with animals was once sitting on a rock on the shore of a river when he caught sight of a snail. He watched its slow, laborious movements for some time. Finally he spoke.

"It seems to me, O Snail," he said gently, "that you are not making much progress."

The Snail paused, ruminated for a moment, and replied, "I am as content with my progress as you are with yours."

"Your shell, I should think," the man went on, "is a great impediment."

"Not at all," said the Snail. "I can curl up very comfortably in it. In fact, I think it's more snug and agreeable than the houses men choose to live in. When danger threatens, it offers a fine refuge—and it's always available."

"I agree with you that it's rent-free and secure, but what would happen if you got rid of it?"

The Snail was shocked. "Get rid of it, indeed. Why, what would my ancestors think?"

"I don't suppose they would think anything, for they have long since vanished from the face of the Earth."

"I have used this shell so long," said the crawling creature, "that I have come to believe it is an inalienable part of me."

"But it isn't, is it?" the naturalist queried.

"I'd lose my identity if I gave it up," the Snail responded. "What would happen to my sense of security?"

"Maybe you could learn to leap or fly," the man suggested. "if you don't try, you'll never find out."

"I don't see much advantage in leaping or flying," the Snail

commented. "All I want to do is eat, bask in the sun, and feel secure. What's wrong with that?"

"I am quite aware that many human beings are of the same opinion," the naturalist reflected, "but wouldn't it be nice if you could travel and see more of the world?"

"Inasmuch as you are suggesting ways in which I should change," the Snail replied, "let me give you a piece of advice. I think men would be better off if they imitated snails and curled up in a comfortable, cozy shell instead of running wild over the Earth and fighting with each other so much of the time. A snail's life is safe, slow, and deliberate. Whenever we don't like something, we crawl into the shell and stay there until we have recovered our equilibrium. It seems to me that men have more to learn from snails than snails from men."

So saying, the snail crawled over the ledge of the rock and was soon out of sight.

The Unshared Carrot

An old woman who had been mean and grouchy throughout her life finally passed through the Gate of Death.

She found herself, as one might suspect, in a very unpleasant place. It was always excessively hot, and she was forced by demons to do all kinds of disagreeable work. This was, of course, not to her liking, but there wasn't much she could do about it. On Earth she could have written to her Congressman or lodged a complaint in court but such methods were not applicable in the overheated inferno.

Finally she appealed—of all places—to heaven. Day after day she prayed for the right to emigrate and get out of her misery. After a time her plea was heard, and a resplendent angel appeared at the place where heaven and hell abut upon one another.

The angel was sympathetic, but not very encouraging. "Your record doesn't do you much credit," he said, "and we can't arbi-

trarily make exceptions. Search your memory, however, and see whether you can remember doing a single good deed while you lived on Earth. If you can find one, we may perhaps be able to help you."

The old lady brooded a long time, trying to remember performing at least one good deed. After a time she recollected that she had once in her earthly life given a carrot to a person who begged for alms.

She invoked the angel and told him the good news.

"Yes," the angel told her, "that good deed might make a difference."

He vanished from sight, but a short time later reappeared, holding a carrot in his hand.

"Take hold of the root of this carrot," he said, "and I shall pull you up to heaven with it."

The old lady grasped it tightly and found herself being lifted off the ground. When the other denizens of hell saw what was happening, they also took hold of the carrot in hopes of escaping in the same way.

The added pressure on the carrot threatened to break it. The old lady became fearful that it would be unable to stand the strain.

"Get away!" she cried. "This carrot belongs to me!"

"If the carrot belongs to you," the angel declared, "then you didn't give it away, after all."

Accident and Design

An employer now and then discussed metaphysics with his chief clerk. Once they spoke about the purpose of the universe.

"It's all a colossal accident," the chief clerk asserted.

The employer disagreed. "The Earth moves about the sun; the seasons regularly follow one another; the fields yield grain and cereals. How do you explain all this?"

"Accident," responded the chief clerk.

The employer did not continue the argument but went his way. At the end of the week the chief clerk came for his paycheck.

"I have been thinking about our conversation," the employer said, "and I have decided that your interesting views may have a practical application. It seems to me that you really have done no work this week and therefore do not deserve to be paid."

The chief clerk protested. "Didn't I come on time each day?"

"Accident," said the employer.

"Well, didn't I work eight hours and sort endless quantities of paper?" asked the chief clerk.

"Sheer accident."

The clerk enumerated all he had done, but was always met with the same reply.

Finally the employer concluded the conversation. "You cannot prove your case," he said, "but if your activities are the result of design, might it not be appropriate to apply the same logic to the universe?"

Animal Ethics

A chicken and a pig once overheard the owner of the farm say that they were scheduled to be slaughtered in a fortnight. Realizing that this was an infringement of their right to live, they hastily convened a meeting of the animals to discuss their grievances against man.

At a specified time they came together to voice their complaints.

"Just think of it," said a sizable pig, "they're fattening me so that it will be profitable to sell me to a butcher. My destiny is to have my carcass served as food for human beings. Out of me they will make bacon, pork chops, pigs' feet, and ham. What have I done to deserve such a fate? Guests at dinner will smack their lips and express more satisfaction with my mortal

remains than they ever did with my living self. I am more valuable dead than alive. Is that fair treatment, I ask you?"

"If anybody ever had a just cause," gobbled an imposing turkey, "you do. But think of my fate. I have become part of a ceremony called Thanksgiving. People say they are giving thanks to the Creator by eating me. While chewing on my body, they make speeches expressing appreciation for the bounty granted to them. Digesting me in their stomachs seems to set their tongues wagging with thanks. I'd feel better if they would at least apologize for eating my carcass, but to make it part of a festival of thanksgiving is, to my way of thinking, distinctly hypocritical."

A cow was the next to be heard.

"All my life I give milk free of charge to the human race," the animal mourned, "and how am I repaid? I am slaughtered, and my body is carved up into sirloin, porterhouse, and round steaks. I don't mind giving free milk, but it's most undignified to have one's body dismembered so that it can gorge their gullets."

At this, all the animals cheered. They passed a resolution that a petition should be delivered to representatives of the human race asking for the redress of just grievances.

A crow extracted a feather from its body with its beak and wrote: "We, your lesser brothers, the members of the Animal Kingdom, do hereby protest against the traditional practice of human beings to slaughter and eat our kind. Inasmuch as the bountiful Earth provides vast quantities of fruits, grains, and vegetables for all, we cannot understand why the practice of cannibalism should not cease forthwith. If cows, sheep, and pigs are able to discipline themselves not to eat human beings, why should not human beings act in the same enlightened manner?"

(Signed) The Animal Kingdom

Tying Up the Cat

A pious tradesman practiced meditation every morning before set-

ting out for work. This experience gave him the inner strength he needed in order to meet the exigencies of the day. His cat, however, posed a problem. It mewed softly as he meditated and rubbed its back against his leg. Annoyed by this interference, the tradesman formed the habit of tying the cat to the bedpost before he started his daily meditations. Before he passed away, he advised his sons to follow his example and to have a quiet period before entering upon the affairs of the day.

His sons dutifully followed his counsel. They, too, meditated each morning—and, being similarly annoyed by the antics of the cat, tied it to the bedpost.

One generation after the other followed the same procedure.

The time came, however, when the pace of life became swifter and the conduct of business more demanding. The more modern descendants of the tradesman, because of the increased pressure entailed by their commercial venture, shortened the period of meditation.

Finally, one of them instituted another change. He simply tied the cat to the bedpost and skipped the meditation altogether, believing that thereby he was faithfully adhering to the advice that his ancestor had given.

UNEXPECTED EMISSARY *Catherine Cabeen Houck*

I breathed a prayer
and it was heard,
the answer came
but not by word
nor flash of light.
But one small bird
sang in the night,
and all my cares
were set aright.

CONVICTION

Goldie L. Morales

She said—God is a myth
Caught in a creed
Inadequate to fill
Life's every need—

Into my consciousness
The idea fell
Like a stone descending
Into a well.

I did not answer her—
I looked at you—
Into your sunlit eyes
And then I knew—

I knew that God is real,
As real as sight,
And that life does illume
The law of right.

DAY'S BEGINNING *Ann D. Franklin*

The day evolves
With sunlight rays
Reflecting on my floor.

My inner thoughts
Begin to dwell
On One whom I adore.

POEMS by William Walter De Bolt

LATEST MIRACLE

Latest miracle
is what happened on waking
this morning. I looked
all around in excitement
like a traveler in a town .

MIRACLES AND PINS

The days come and graduate
and the world bulges with wonders
distributed everywhere like pieces
of the body of Osiris.

(Nobody invites a disbeliever over evenings
or gets under his umbrella.)

All is pleasant as a whistle's echo
and I will be a collector of miracles,
a devotee of the unusual—
after it is clear what happens
to the pins in our house.

LOW ROADS

In and out,
    Out and in,
Low roads seek
    And never win.

Low roads end
    Like a ripe peach
Which is close
    Enough to reach.

PROOF

Faces, like stamps, prove
size and shape contribute less
than what the eye reads.

POOR FOOL

Since I never got
a gun as planned, my ego,
poor fool, makes the noise.

AMNESIA

When I was young as dreams I knew
    What later on I'd be,
And now I wonder where to find
    Blueprints I made of me.

LIFE

Life, like the Bactrian camel,
has two humps --
one to carry the burdens of yesterday,
and the other
the hope of tomorrow.

PSALM: GO OUT AND DO IT

Kenneth Pobo

Praise the Lord for jangling telephones,
for conversations held during
loud Raiders' oldies, for prayers
committed at noisy drugstores.

Oh Praise the Lord for a broken
bank, when we must trust in
His Onliness. Praise Him for
chaos during a Sidewalk Sale.
Fail not to sing to His Name.

Oh Praise the Lord
for feathers of owl
and bark of bassett through
the ages, for trees and the
mock subtlety of cats.

Oh Praise the Lord for seas
aslosh with shrimpers
or the quiet moan of
distant wolves. Everybody come —
come Praise the Lord!

THE DAY MY WORLD STOOD STILL

Vivian M. Singerling

AS I STOOD admiring the sunrise from a grassy knoll which overlooked a valley of farmland, I became aware of the presence of someone. I turned to look around, suspecting a member of the family had come from the house, but there was no one in sight. The area around me was open with no place for anyone to be concealed. Suddenly I realized there was an alien hush permeating the air; not ominous, just the essence of tranquility. Time seemed to be standing still; not a sound or even the murmur of a breeze.

I didn't ponder long, I just knew that God stood beside me as I admired some of His landscaping.

My middle name should have been "Adversity," for my childhood, starting from the moment I was born, was one emotional upset after another. My experiences were not those usually found in the life of a child. When I was five years old, my father deserted the family. When I was six, my mother became seriously ill with tuberculosis and was confined in a sanitarium until her death three years later.

After being separated from my mother, I started a journey from one family of relatives to another. Each would care for me as long as their circumstances permitted. During these years, I yearned for the love of parents and a permanent home where I could experience the feeling of being truly wanted.

Finally, at the age of thirteen, my dream came true, and I was happy for the first time in my life. But happiness, I guess, wasn't meant for me. Three years later my foster parents became seriously involved in marital problems for which there was no solution. Need I say more? I had prayed for only a home and parents, not for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

This was the final blow that severed the last thread of my faith in anything. Life became black chaos and despair, with one

thought in my mind: self-destruction.

To lose one's faith in humanity, life, and God can be devastating. There just couldn't be a God! Surely He would not allow an innocent child to suffer. I had done no wrong.

Each time I planned an attempt at suicide, I could not go through with it. What was wrong? I didn't have any reason to live. Maybe I was afraid to die. That didn't make any sense, either. Possibly there was just a tiny ray of faith hidden in the subconscious. . . . Consequently I gave up my dire thoughts and turned to those of existing; grasping at what seemed to be the only thing that was substantial and wholesome in life: the world of nature. The woods with their trees and wildlife became my sanctuary. Therefore I spent as much time as possible amid nature's serenity.

ONE SUMMER, while still in my teens, I had the opoortunity of spending a vacation with some relatives in a rural area. While there, I would arise very early in the morning and go out to watch and listen to nature's awakening, before it was spoiled by man's worldly sounds. So there I was that certain morning when my world stood still, and God through nature finally penetrated my armor of self-pity.

How can a lowly human describe the "feeling" of God? One can't. There are no words in all the languages of the universe. Our adjectives are unworthy; such words have yet to be created. One cannot speak them, only feel them.

From that moment on, no one would ever convince me that there wasn't a God.

I wanted to shout to the treetops of this encounter, but my youth denied me the courage to stand up against the skepticism and possible ridicule of my listeners, and I remained silent. Maybe in time I could tell of this. . . .

THIS EXPERIENCE brought to mind two questions. Why did it happen to me? And: Was God trying to tell me something? These led

to more profound thoughts.

My material life did not change. Many problems continued as in the past, for I was not a favored someone set apart from others.

What did change was my way of thinking. I was convinced that there was a higher spiritual force above man, whether one chose to call it God or another name.

His spiritual presence beside me that morning had awakened me to the fact that we truly are never alone, that our problems may be minimized if we will take time to seek the beauty and good things in life, of which there are many.

After many years of living, I have concluded that God must have been putting his stamp of approval on the decision I had made — to live life, not destroy it. How thankful I have been for this when I think of the things I would have missed by not living: the love of a husband and children. the opportunity of being a mother, the challenges we face in life and must strive to conquer.

In the fairy tales of old, sons were sent out into the world to seek their fortunes. This, in a sense, is God's purpose for us. Not to seek material fortunes, but to seek the fortunes of our inner selves—what we become as a human being and how we respect the purpose of that being.

I finally learned that the forces of inner strength and faith can withstand the impact of any and all of life's problems.

Epilogue

"God's ways are very strange" may be just a cliches, but it is so true. Sixteen years ago the little church in our community was in dire need of a Sunday school teacher. With reservations, I agreed to teach a class. My Biblical knowledge was scant. I began teaching with only a positive belief in God and His Son. It has been most personally rewarding to study and learn along with my class. To instill in these children a long and lasting faith that will aid them through any adversities of life has been my aim.

PRAYER FOR PREPAREDNESS

Marion J. Richardson

Our life on this earth
is not for long. . .
help us Lord
to prepare for the day
we will enter
the heavenly world —
give us strength
of mind and body
to live a life
that breathes
in the shadow
of the Eternal Spirit.

LET IT BE

Jaye Giammarino

Let peace bear the tool
that bends the arrow of despair
to a circle of never-ending hope.

Let it fan the wind
which sweeps hate from its path
like tumbleweed turning over
the new leaf of brotherhood.

And let it light the fire that warms
the touch of friendly hands
that clasp the pain of other men
and melts the snow of apathy. . .

Let it stir the pulsebeat of the world
to throb with the blood of compassion,
that man may gather in the manna
of universal love
and break bread with God.

MADE WHOLE BY THE HAND OF GOD

Helen Gee Woods

IN A FAMILY of almost a lost generation they who had sat idly by without thinking of a future were indeed lost mortals. Two of the four boys grew to be a pathetic spectacle, displaying their existence without identity, exhibiting pranks that might have been those of three-year-olds.

They exercised very little intelligence, whose maturity should have been progression. . . . Had their youth been stunted or were they victims of "the sins of the Fathers"?

In grave contemplation one may observe, attempt to define, or to analyze from a psychological viewpoint, but this affords no cure for those ailing unless they are willing to give up habits which have brought about their state of being.

They were so wrapped in materialism there was no sense of spiritual life which could have meant for them an awakening of the spirit and a healing. Instead of whole they became disintegrated persons searching for selfhood.

If one is to engage in the wonder of being made new, the supreme test is to find oneself; and this by the development of grace and a change to ordered conduct. Man may need to go to the depths of the subconscious mind to revise his thought—to clarify and straighten his thinking and thus enter into obedience with his Lord who brings the light out of darkness.

This is the clearinghouse against evil temptation. Once it is accepted, man is filled with good that is God. His attitude turns to faith and to prayer. A prayer constantly sings in his heart.

Now, where once he was almost a shifting robot, stumbling aimlessly without a purpose, he relies on the Lord. With clearer

eyes he resists weakness, doubt, and insecurity that once made him irresponsible.

In the light of new dawn he discards the old premise for new directions. His wonder is amazement found of the cosmos as the infinite, eternal order of creation in harmony with the universe.

With this newly-found sense of being he marvels at spiritual healing; and another great blessing comes: it is the joy of love, which awakens the soul, heart, and eyes in everyone made whole . . . . He rejoices in a new-found world that shines as if a galaxy of stars surrounded him.

At last, after years of the suffering that comes from being not true to nature, he has become an integrated being true both to nature and himself. He has received the purification of a universal mind.

I REACH FOR THY HAND

Ella Castle Nedrow

I start my day, dear Jesus,
By reaching for Thy hand;
A sweet assurance fills me,
When I know that Thou doth stand,
Unfailing, with me always,
I meet the day with calm;
Thy kindly voice inspires me
To new life, like a balm.

I sense the burden lifted;
My lips send forth a song. . .
My step is lighter, surer;
Thou, Lord, hath made me strong.

THE RURAL JOURNAL

Estelle D. Broadrick

SOMEHOW, although this day offers me the time to write, and I long to make a poetic tapestry of words, I cannot find the words to fill up the white pages before me. The creative urge is suffering a kind of temporary paralysis. . . .

There are days when I am called to fence-mending, gathering and canning vegetables and fruits, spading the earth to plant flower-seeds, chasing wayward calves from the grain-fields, or painting a gate, and these are the days when my mind is most fertile. Then lines of poetry sing their way into my mind—and there is not time to write them down. . . . Like silver cobwebs suddenly freed which float away in the air, the poetic thoughts which come unbidden to my mind float away, too. . . .

Writing, like other forms of art, seems at times to be a luxury. The artist, poet, sage, novelist, actor must sometimes use part of his time, energy, and talent to earn dollars to pay electric and water and telephone bills, to buy chops and milk and bread and stamps and paper and canvas and paints, not to mention grass, seed, clothes, and a little something for taxes, church, and charity.

Journalism, painting, composing, and acting must often be sparetime occupations for really talented people. Art is an extravagance, a luxury to which only a favored few, the already-arrived, are able to devote the best of their thought, time, and strength.

So today, when the muse evades me, I will lend my hands to farmwork and housework, and perhaps another day I will steal some hours for writing. . . .

A blue haze lies on distant hills, the blue chiffon scarves

of autumn combined with the blue-gray smoke drifting from tobacco barns, where the darkfired crops are being cured by sawdust smoke

A solitary walk, a woodland path leading to a hill clothed in fescue grass and a few hickory trees burning with a golden radiance. The winds attack the orphaned leaves and send them scurrying.

Labyrinthine tangles of honeysuckle vines, still wearing their glossy green leaves. I heard the faint melancholy call of a dove and a late and lonely cricket called from the shelter of a rock shutting out of the earth.

The bloom and beauty of summer is fading in rustling grandeur. Intermingled shades and sheens of green and the purple glory of the thistle, the tall cedars casting green gloom on the forest floor. . . . It is a world of great and awesome beauty, and the eyes never tire in their search and appreciation of the wonder of the rural world.

The blue bowl of heaven is dotted with cotton clouds, and the sun sends down warming rays as I make my way down the hill and across the pastures. A meadow-lark flies up from the tall grass and, flying a short distance, sends her silvery sweet song into the air. . . .

The dogs look at me reproachfully as I return. Despite their disappointment at being left behind, they bark a noisy welcome when I reach the gate. . . .

Refreshed and renewed, I go back to my desk and typewriter to try and record some of the magical moments of country living.

***

Dennis Barry Caroll

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR. We are very happy to announce that Dennis Barry Carroll, of Hagerstown, Maryland, has accepted our invitation to become a Contributing Editor. Born in 1949, Dennis was educated at Hagerstown Junior College, Shepherd College, and the University of Maryland. Married and the father of one daughter, he is a business associate and friend of President Reuben L. Musey and shares his interests in music, history, and writing. He is a Methodist.

ECUMENISM *Max S. Barker*

From enemy,
To hon ored guest,
To brother,
To family,
We change
And travel
To ecumenism blest
For God.

THE COMMUTER'S PRAYER

Helene K. Chartier

God, I dream of wheat-filled fields
Of rivers flowing smooth and sure
Of jagged rocks washed by the systematic tide
YOU set in motion!

God, I vision quiet lakes and green hills
Where butterflies and bees conduct business
Where ripe fruits and harvestime advertise
YOUR earthly promotion!

God, instead I am stranded in expressway traffic
Battling element: exhaust fumes
Stereo tape decks blaring louder than thoughts
YOU want to collect!

At five o'clock I stop and
I listen for YOU, God,
During
Heavy traffic!

HAVE FUN ON YOUR SWING, LITTLE CHILD

Del Ash

Have fun on your swing, Little Child, today—
Between your naps play hard;
Tomorrow things may different be,
The ups and downs that you must meet
Along Life's cobbled road
Are not all fun, but in the end
You will count them sweet.
Have fun on your swing, Little Child, today.

THE WHAT-IFS

Virginia Arnold

WHEN we are young, we tend to be optimists. So much so that it overflows unto those we come in contact with. Life is good!

The young live with enthusiasm. They are expectant. They dream. They have visions. They plan, but most of all they have hope for the future.

With age, we often become hardened, cynical, and unsure. Fear grips us and holds us back.

The person who dreamed of having children starts to fear having them. "What if there is a war or famine?"

The family needing to add a room or to trade houses is afraid. They say, "What if a depression comes?"

One spouse dreams of a vacation. The other says, "What if we have a wreck?"

We all need some caution in life. But some people will never attain full potential. They will never scale the heights because the "what-ifs" have taken over. The "what-ifs" defeat them.

A MIRACLE SOMETIMES TAKES LONG

Anonymous

A GRUDGE is a very heavy thing. A real burden to carry through life. My anger became so heavy in fact that one day I simply had to release it. But who was I actually mad at?

The habit of blaming all of my troubles on either my husband or my mother, or both, had resulted in a constant wallowing in self-pity and in bitter resentment against the two people I should love the most. I had really built up a strong case against them. Now I had to make a truly great effort to be completely honest with myself. Was it my mother and husband I was mad at or was it perhaps me? I did not like myself at all and I was not a likeable person, to be sure.

Constantly critical, I belittled everything my husband said or did. In every discussion I simply had to be right. Every decision was mine. I just could not give a compliment or say "thank you" to anyone.

Certainly not a Christian person.

Separately my sons had come to me.

"Mother, why don't we ever laugh?" asked the younger one. True, the atmosphere in our home was not warm or cheerful and one felt no love.

"Mom, we just can't seem to talk things over here." This from the older one. True, there was no relaxed openness or confidence and no lively chats among the members of my family. Our daughter had simply left when she was old enough to go.

Certainly not a Christian home.

And yet I had made my personal commitment to Christ sev-

eral years before this. Slowly and one by one I had released other deeply rooted enemies to Him. Because I had felt His Presence so profoundly and consistently I was able to overcome an extreme anxiety about everything my children did. Through faith that He cares for us and by turning my thoughts to Him every minute of every day a completely unfounded fear of fire and worry over the lack of money were dissipated. With all of these an underlying concern about what other people were thinking of us was replaced by the certainty that we are uniquely His. Now I was free of these baseless negative ideas, and some peace came.

But I could not understand this knot of anger. It seemed immovable. My husband and I began to discuss divorce and made an effort through professional counseling to find the reason for our unhappiness. It did not help.

I knew that Christ would help. He was the only One who really could know the reason for this grudge I had held onto so tightly for so long. If I could earnestly, sincerely give Him the problem, He would help. I was certain of this.

And so the time came. His time! I was ready. Through tears and despair and prayer I was ready to listen. Really listen. I got down—not to my knees but all the way down—flat on the floor with the palms of my hands turned upward in a gesture of receptivity. I prayed aloud.

"Dear Jesus God, what is this hate that permeates my whole being? Why is this cancer of anger eating our lives away?"

Then I waited.

Almost immediately the answer came. Strong. Sure. Clear.

"You feel that you do not belong in your own home."

Dumbfounded, I burst into great racking sobs of shock and disbelief. This was ridiculous. This was incredible. And yet it was so. I knew it was so. He had said it.

Yes, it was so. I had not let myself forget that when I was a very little girl my mother told me that no one had wanted me

to be born. The paralyzing inferiority and insecurity caused by this memory had entwined itself through five lives—my husband's as well as my own and our children's.

But how could a little girl understand the frustrations and perhaps deep problems of her mother's life? How harrassed she must have been. And what naughtiness of mine might have triggered those words at a time when her control and patience were taxed to their very end.

Finally I understood.

The miracle has been that with understanding, healing was almost immediate. And with healing came forgiveness. And with forgiveness came forgetting. Now I hold a very warm feeling in my heart for my mother and I can praise my family and say 'thank you.' As an added wonder, my relationships in the wider circles of living are now warm and pleasant, too. Surely people had sensed my hostile attitude and recoiled from me before.

And now I like myself.

So I have come to believe that as we allow our emotional hurts and old wounds to be brought up to the surface and healed, God can through us forgive and release that person who, perhaps unwittingly, caused them. And in the same way we are forgiven for the pain and unhappiness we have inflicted upon others.

A lightened heart is a miracle and a joy!

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE *Jaye Giammarino*

Thank you, Lord,
for the gift of love,
but most of all
thank you
for loving me—
even when I am
unlovable.

NOTICES AND COMMENT

DEATH OF AN ADVISOR. We are very sorry to announce the death this spring of Josephine Voracek, of Saint Louis, Mo., who served as an Advisor in the Central Zone and contributed many highly-talented pages to this publication.

LIBRARY ADDITIONS. FIP's library has gratefully welcomed the following books. *God-Centered Therapy, Happy Is The Man, Faith of Little Creatures*—gifts from their author, F. Bernadette Turner; *Nature's Theme of Peace* by Velta Myrle Allen; *The Awakening of Kundalini* by Gopi Krishna; *The Nature and Origin of the New Testament* by J. Merle Rife *(Philosophical Library); The Searching Soul,* Poems by Margaret Gordon *(Exposition Press);* and *Animal Stories (with a Metaphysical Slant)* by California Advisor Florence De Groat.

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A GRAIN OF SAND

Lillian Hammer

I'm a little driftwood
A grain of sand, a dust-flake
in the sea
Floating in the labyrinths
of nature's
silent stream,
Of time and space —
Not touched by human mind.

The winds whistling the ancient
tune of loneliness
Speeding to endless shores
where the waves
never
tire
never
rest. . .
to take a breath. . .

The earth a bouncing ball
in cosmos
Spinning in orbit
round and round
like a merry-go-round. . .
not aware of its speed. . .

What is the purpose,
Where does it lead?
What is the goal
Of it all?

THERE COMES A TIME. . . .

We regret to announce that, with inflationary costs and higher postage rates (and prospects of further increases), the Fellowship can no longer send free copies of *FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER*.

If your subscription has expired, we sincerely hope you will want to renew it. Otherwise, we will be compelled to stop sending you further copies.

As yet, we have not increased our subscription rates, which do not cover present costs.

We are sorry that the time has come when—of necessity—we must follow this procedure.